

A
S E R I O U S
EXHORTATION,

With some

Important Advices,

Relating to the late Cases about

CONFORMITY,

Recommended to the

Present Dissenters

From the

CHURCH of ENGLAND.

By William Cave

W. Cave

L O N D O N,

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A Serious

EXHORTATION,

With some Important

Advices, &c.

Recommended to the *Dissenters* from
the *Church of England*.

THE offering friendly Advice and Counsel, especially in great and important Cases, is, tho often, a Thankless, yet a very Charitable Office : a thing agreeable to the best Inclinations of Humane Nature, and highly conducive to the Necessities of Men, and consequently needs no Apology to introduce it. We live, 'tis true, in an ill-Natured and Censorious Age, wherein 'tis rare to find any one, who will not take with the Left-hand, what's offered to them with the Right. But I am not discouraged from this Attempt, by the Peevishness and Frowardness of many that differ from us, Remembring that all Honest Undertakings (and such I am sure this is) are under the more peculiar Conduct and Blessing of the Divine Providence, which can and will succeed and prosper them to an happy Issue, if Mens own Obstinacy and Perverseness do not put a Bar in the way to hinder it. I do therefore

therefore beseech our *Dissenting Brethren*, with all the earnestness that becomes a matter of so much Importance, and with all the Kindness and Tenderness that becomes a Christian, that they would *suffer the Word of Exhortation*, and duly weigh and consider the Requests and Advices that are here plainly laid before them, which I hope will be found such, as carry their own Light and Evidence along with them.

II.

And First, *We beg of them to believe, That they may be mistaken about those matters, which are alledged as the Causes of their Separation.* This, one would think, were as needless, as 'tis a modest and reasonable Request. For did ever any Man (the Bishop of Rome excepted) lay claim to Infallibility? Do not the woeful Infirmities of Humane Nature, the Weakness and Short-sightedness of our Understandings, the daily Experience of our selves, and the lamentable Failures we observe in others, sufficiently convince us, how prone we are to Error and Mistake? But tho' this be granted and owned on all hands, yet in Practice, we frequently find Men acting by other Measures. For, how many are there, that in the most Controverted Cases bear up themselves with as much Confidence and Assurance, censure others with as Magisterial a Boldness, condemn the things enjoined by our Church, with as positive and peremptory a Determination, as if they were infallibly sure, that they are in the Right, and all others in the Wrong that differ from them. The early Prepossession of a contrary Opinion, the powerful Prejudices of Education, an implicate and unexamined Belief of what their

their Guides and Leaders teach them, have a strange force upon the Minds of Men, so that in effect, they no more doubt of the Truth and Goodness of the Cause they are engaged in, than they question the Articles of their Creed. Wherefore, I do once and again intreat them, that laying aside all Pride, Partiality, and Self-conceit, they would not *think more highly of themselves*, and of their own way, *than they ought to think*; especially remembering, that the Matters contended about are confessedly Disputable, and that they cannot be ignorant, that the Case seems otherwise to others, who may at least be allowed to be as wise Men, and as competent Judges as themselves. Truth makes the easiest Entrance into modest and humble Minds; *The Meek will be guide in Judgment, the Meek will be teach his way*; The Spirit of God never rests upon a Proud Man.

II

Secondly, *We beg of them, that they would seriously and impartially weigh and consider, as well what is said on the one side, as on the other.* This is a piece of Justice that every one owes to Truth, and which indeed every Man owes to himself, that is not willing to be deceived. To take up with Prejudices, which Education or long Custom have instilled into him, or wherein any other Arts or Methods have engaged him, without strictly enquiring whether those Prejudices stand upon a firm Foundation, is to see only on one side: to bind up ones self in the Judgment or Opinion of any Man, that is not Divinely-inspired and Infallible, or pertinaciously to adhere to any Party of Men; how plausible and specious soever their Pretences may be; without examining their
Grounds,

Grounds, and endeavouring to know what is said
 against them, is to choose a Persuasion at a perad-
 venture; and 'tis great odds whether such a one be
 in the right. In all Enquiries after Truth, we ought
 to keep an Ear open for one side of the Controver-
 sie, as well as the other, and not to think we have
 done enough, till without Favour or Prejudice, and
 to the best of our Understandings, we have heard,
 tryed, and judged, the Reasons brought, as well for,
 as against it. And till this be done, I see not with
 what pretence of Reason, Men can talk so much of
 their *Scruples*, or plead for Favour on the account of
 their Dissatisfactions. Consciences truly tender, are
 willing and desirous to embrace all opportunities of Re-
 solution, & are ready to kiss the Hand that would bring
 them better information, and are not wont to neglect,
 much less thrust from them the means that might ease
 them of their Doubts and Scruples. We justly blame
 it in them of the Church of *Rome*, that in a manner
 they resign up their Understandings to their Guides and
 Confessors, and are not suffered to be truly acquaint-
 ed with the *Protestant* Principles, and the Grounds
 and Reasons of the Reformation; nor to Read any
 of the Books, that are written for their Conviction,
 without a special and peculiar Licence. Whether our
 Brethren of the Separation be under any such Spirit-
 ual Discipline, I know not; sure I am it looks very
 oddly, that so many of them are no more concerned
 to understand the true State of the Church of *Eng-
 land*, and the Nature and Reasons of her Constitutions,
 that so few of them care to Confer with those that
 are able to Instruct them, but Cry out, *They are sa-
 tisfied already*; nay, some of them, to my know-
 ledge, when desired to propose their Scruples, in order
 to the giving them satisfaction, have plainly and ab-
 solutely

solutely refused to do it. Little reason there is to believe, that such Persons have ever Read and Examined what the Church of *England* has to say for her self. Are there not many, that not only Scruple, but Rail at the Book of *Common-Prayer*, that yet never heard it, nor perhaps, ever read it, in all their Lives? And if this be not to speak Evil of what they know not, I cannot tell what is. How many incomparable Books have been heretofore written in defence of our *Church*, her Rites and Usages, that yet generally lie by the Walls, little known, and less read, by those that so much Cry out against her. And at this time how many excellent Discourses have been Published, for the satisfaction of *Dissenters*, written with the greatest Temper and Moderation; with the utmost plainness and perspicuity, with all imaginable evidence and strength of Reasoning; so short, as not to require any considerable portion, either of Time or Cost, so suited to present Circumstances, as to obviate every material Objection, that is made against Communion with us; and yet there is just cause to fear, that the far greatest part of our *Dissenters* are meer strangers to them, and are not so just to themselves, or us, as to give them the reading: And that those few that do look into them, do it rather out of a design to pick quarrels against them, and to expose them in scurrilous or cavilling Pamphlets, than to receive satisfaction by them. I do heartily, and from my Soul, wish an end of these Contentions, and that there were no further occasion for them; but if our *Dissenting Brethren* will still proceed in this way, we desire, (and hope 'tis but what is reasonable) that the things in difference may be debated in the most quiet, peaceable, and amicable manner, that they may be gravely and substanti-

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ally managed, and only the Merits of the Cause attended to, and that the Controversie may not be turned off to mean and trifling Persons, whose highest Attainment perhaps it is, to write an idle and senseless Pamphlet, and which can serve no other use, but only that the People may be borne in hand, that such and such Books are Answered. Which is so unmanly and disingenious a way, and so like the shifving Artifices of them of the Church of *Rome*, that I am apt to persuade my self, the wiser Heads of the *Dissenting Party* cannot but be ashamed of it. If they be not, 'tis plain to all the World, they are willing to serve an ill Design by the most unwarrantable Means. But however that be, we think we have great Reason to expect from them, that they should hear our *Church* before they condemn Her, and consider what has been said for the removing of their Doubts, before they tell us any more of *Scruples*, *Tender-Consciences*, and the hard measure that they meet withall. I confess, could I meet with a Person that had brought himself to some kind of Unbias'dness and indifferency of Temper, and that design'd nothing more than to seek and find the right way of Serving God, without respect to the Intrigues and Interests of this or that particular Party; and in order thereunto, had with a sincere and honest Mind read whatever might probably conduce to his Satisfaction, fairly proposed his Scruples, and modestly consulted with those that were most proper to advise him, and humbly begged the Guidance and Direction of the Divine Grace and Blessing; and yet after all, should still labour under his old Dissatisfactions; I should heartily pity and pray for such a Man, and think my self obliged to improve all my Interest for Favour and Forbearance towards him. But such Persons as these, I am afraid,
are

are but thin sowed; and, without Breach of Charity, it may be supposed, there is not One of a Thousand.

III.

Thirdly, *We desire, that before they go on to accuse our Church with driving them into Separation, they would directly charge her with imposing sinful terms of Communion.* And unless they do this, and when they have done it, make it good, (for barely to accuse, I hope, is not sufficient,) I see not which way they can possibly justify their Separation from us. 'Tis upon this account that the whole *Protestant* Reformation defends their Departure from the Church of *Rome*. They found the Doctrine of that Church infinitely corrupt in several of the main Principles of Religion, New Articles of Faith introduced, and bound upon the Consciences of Men under pain of Damnation, its Worship overgrown with very gross Idolatry and Superstition; its Rites and Ceremonies not only over-numerous, but many of them advanced into proper and direct Acts of Worship, and the use of them made necessary to Salvation; and besides, its Members required to joyn and communicate in these Corruptions and Depravations, nay, and all Proposals and Attempts towards a Reformation obstinately rejected and thrown out; in which Case, they did with great Reason and Justice depart from her: which we may be confident they would not have done, had no more been required of them, than instead of Worshipping Images, to use the *Sign* of the *Cross* in Baptism, or instead of the Adoration of the Host, to kneel at the Receiving of the *Sacrament*. A Learned *Protestant* Divine, of great Name and Note, has expressed to us; "That had there been no other Faults in

*Amyrald.
de Secess.
ab Eccles.
Rom. pag.
233.*

“ the Church of *Rome*,—besides their useles Ceremo-
 “ nies in Baptisme, and some other things that are,
 “ beyond the measure and *genius* of the Christian Re-
 “ ligion, they had still continued in the Commu-
 “ nion of that Church. Indeed did the Church of
England command any thing which Christ has
 prohibited, or prohibit any thing which Christ has
 commanded, then *come ye out from among them, and*
be ye separate, saith the Lord, were good Warrant and
 Authority. But where do we meet with these pro-
 hibitions? not in the word of God, not in the nature
 and reason of the things themselves? nor indeed do we
 find our Dissenting Brethren of late very forward to
 fasten this charge, and much less to prove it; whatever
 unwary sayings may fall from any of them in the heat
 and warmth of Disputation, or be suggested by indi-
 rect consequences, and artificial insinuations. And if
 our Church commands nothing that renders her Com-
 munion sinful, then certainly Separation from her
 must be unlawful, because the Peace and Unity of the
 Church, and obedience to the commands of lawful
 Authority, are expresse and indispensable duties; and
 a few private suspicions of the unlawfulness of the
 thing are not sufficient to sway against plain, publick,
 and necessary Duties: nor can it be safe to reject
 Communicating with those, with whom Christ him-
 self does not refuse Communion. This I am sure was
 once thought good Doctrine by the cheifest of our
 Dissenters, who when time was, reasoned thus against
 those that subdivided from them; “ If we be a
 “ Church of Christ, and Christ hold Communion with
 “ us, why do you Separate from us? If we be the Body
 “ of Christ, do not they that Separate from the Body,
 “ Separate from the Head also? we are loath to speak
 “ any thing that may offend you, yet we entreat you
 “ to

“ to consider, that if the Apostle call those Divisions
 “ of the Church of *Corinth* (wherein Christians did
 “ not separate into divers formed Congregations in the
 “ Sacrament of the Lords Supper,) *Schisms*, (1 Cor.
 “ 1. 10.) may not your Secession from us, and pro-
 “ fessing you cannot joyn with us as Members, and
 “ setting up Congregations of another Communion,
 “ be more properly called *Schism*? ----- You gather
 “ Churches out of your Churches, and set up Churches
 “ in an opposite way to our Churches, and all this
 “ you do voluntarily and unwarrantably, not having
 “ any sufficient cause for it.

And in the same Book they tell us of a Two-fold
 Schism, Negative and Positive; “ Negative, when
 “ Men do peaceably and quietly withdraw from
 “ Communion with a Church, not making a Head
 “ against that Church, from which they are depart-
 “ ed: the other is, when Persons so withdrawing
 “ do consociate and withdraw themselves into a dis-
 “ tinct and opposite Body, setting up a Church a-
 “ gainst a Church, which (say they) *Camero* calls
 “ a Schism by way of Eminency; and further tells
 “ us, There are Four Causes, that make a Separation
 “ from a Church lawful; 1. When they that Sepa-
 “ rate are grievously and intollerably Persecuted;
 “ 2. When the Church they Separate from is Hereti-
 “ cal; 3. When it is Idolatrous; 4. When it is the
 “ Seat of Antichrist. And where none of these four
 “ are found, there the Separation is insufficient, and
 “ Schism. Now we are fully assured, that none of
 “ these Four Causes can be justly charg'd upon our
 “ Congregations; therefore you must not be dis-
 “ pleased with us, but with your selves, if we blame
 “ you as guilty of positive Schism. All which is as
 true

true now, as it was then, and as applicable to us and them as it was to them and their *Dissenters*.

Instit.
lib. 4. Sect.
10, 11, 12.
fol. 349.

Admit then, there were some things in our Constitution that might be contrived to better purposes, and that needed Amendment and Alteration; yet I hope every Defect, or supposed Corruption in a Church, is not a sufficient ground for Separation, or warrant enough to rend and tear the Church in pieces. Let Mr. *Calvin* judge between us in this matter, who says, "That wherever the Word of God is duly Preached, and reverently attended to, and the true use of the Sacraments kept up, there is the plain Appearance of a true Church, whose Authority no Man may safely despise, or reject its Admonitions, or resist its Counsels, or set at nought its Discipline, much less Separate from it, and Violate its Unity; for that our Lord has so great regard to the Communion of his Church, that he accounts him an Apostate from his Religion who obstinately Separates from any Christian Society, which keeps up the true Ministry of the Word and Sacraments: that such a Separation is a denial of God and Christ, and that it is a dangerous and pernicious Temptation, so much as to think of Separating from such a Church; the Communion whereof is never to be rejected, so long as it continues in the true use of the Word and Sacraments, *though otherwise it be over-run with many Blemishes and Corruptions*. Which is as plain and full a Determination of the Case, as if he had particularly designed it against the Doctrine and Practice of the Modern *Dissenters* from our Church.

IV.

Fourthly, *We entreat them to Consider, Whether it be pure Conscience, and mere Zeal for the Honour of Religion, and not very often Discontent, or Trade and Interest, that has the main stroke in keeping them from Communion with our Church.* Far be it from me to judge the Secrets of Mens Hearts, or to fasten such a Charge on the whole Body of *Dissenters*, yea, I accuse not any particular Person; but only desire, they would lay their Hand upon their Hearts, and deal impartially with themselves, and say, whether they stand clear before God in this matter. And there is the more Reason to put Men upon this Enquiry, not only because Secular Ends are very apt to mix with, and shelter themselves under the shadow of Religion; but because this has been an old Artifice, made use of to promote Separation. Thus the *Donatists* in the Primitive Times upheld their Separation from the *Catholic* Church, and kept their Party fast together, by Trading only within themselves, by employing none to Till their Grounds, or be their Stewards, but those that would be of their side; nay, and sometimes hiring Persons by large Sums of Money to be Baptiz'd into their Party, as *Crispin* did the People of *Mappalia*. And how evident the same Policy is among our Modern *Quakers*, is too notorious to need either Proof or Observation. Time was, when it was made an Argument to prove *Independency* to be a Faction, and not matter of Conscience, because Needy, broken decayed Men, who knew not how to live, and hoped to get something, turned *Independents*, and became Sticklers for it; that some who had businesses, Causes, and Matters depending, struck in with them, and pleaded for them,

*Vid. Aug.
Epist. 173.
(ad Crisp.)*

*Edward's
further Discovery,
p. 185.*

them, that so they might find Friends, be sooner dispatched, and fare better in their Causes; that Ambitious, Proud, Covetous Men, who had a mind to Offices, places of profit about the Army, Excise, &c. turned about to the *Independents*, and were great Zealots for them. Thus it was then, and whether the same Leaven do not still spread and ferment, and perhaps as much as ever, there is just cause to suspect? Whoever looks into the Trading part of this City, and indeed of the whole Nation, must needs be a very heedless and indiligent Observer, if he do not take notice, how Interests are formed, and by what Methods Parties and Factions are kept up, how many Thousands of the Poorer sort of *Dissenters* depend on this or that Man for their Work, and consequently for their Livelihood and Subsistence; how many depend upon others for their Trade and Custom, whom accordingly these Men can readily Command, and do produce to give Votes, and increase Parties on all Publick Occasions; and what little Encouragement any Man finds from them, that once deserts them, and comes over to the Church of *England*. There is another thing that contributes not a little to this Jealousie and Suspicion, that many of the Chiefest, and most Stiff and Zealous of the *Dissenting* Party, are they, at least the immediate Descendants of those, who in the late Evil-Times, by Rapine and Violence shared among themselves the Revenues of the Church, and the Patrimony of the Crown, and are said still privately to keep on foot their Titles to them. And if so, what wonder if such Men look on themselves, as obliged in point of Interest, to widen Breaches, foment Differences, increase Factions; and all this to Subvert and over-turn the Church of *England*; being well assured, they can never hope, but over the Ruins

Ruines of this Church, to make way to their once *sweet Possessions*? Let Men therefore impartially examine themselves, and search, whether a Worldly Spirit be not at the bottom of their Zeal and Stiffness. These I confess are Designs too Base and Sordid, to be owned above Board: but *be not Deceived, God is not Mocked; Man looks to the outward Appearance, but God looks to the Heart.*

V.

Fifthly, *We desire them to Consider, Whether it be not a Just Prejudice to their Cause, and that which ought to prevail with Men Modest and Peaceable, that in those things, wherein they differ from us, they are Condemned by the Practice of the whole Catholick Church for Fifteen Hundred Years together.* This, were I minded, might afford a large Field for Discourse, but I shall instance only, and that very briefly, in a few Particulars.

And First, We desire them to produce any settled part of the Christian Church, that ever was without Episcopal Government, till the time of *Calvin*: it being then as hard to find any part of the Christian World without a Church, as to find a Church without a Bishop. This is so evident in the most early Antiquities of the Church, that I believe our *Dissenters* begin to grow sick of the Controversie. And if *Blondell*, *Salmasius* and *Daille*, (whose great Parts, Learning, and indefatigable Industry, could, if any thing, have made out the contrary) have been forced to grant, That *Episcopacy* obtained in the Church within a few Years after the *Apostolick Age*; We are sure we can carry it higher, even up to the Apostles themselves. There are but two passages,

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that

Idem Presbyter, qui Episcopus, & antequam diaboli instigatu studio in religione secerent, &c. Hier. in Epist. ad Tit. c. 1.

that I know of, in all Antiquity, of any Note, and both of them not till the latter end of the *Fourth Century*, that may seem to question *Episcopal Authority*: The One, That famous and well known passage of *St. Jerom*, which yet when improved to the utmost that it is capable of, only intimates *Episcopacy* not to be of *Apostolical* Institution. And very clear it is to those that are acquainted with *St. Jeroms* Writings, that he often Wrote in haste, and did not always weigh things at the Beam, and forgot at one time, what he had said at another; that many expressions fell from him in the heat of Disputation, according to the warmth and the eagerness of his Temper, & that he was particularly chased into this Assertion by the fierce opposition of the *Deacons* at *Rome*, who began to Usurp upon, and over-top the *Presbyters*, which tempted him to Magnifie and Extol their Place and Dignity, as anciently equal to the *Episcopal* Office, and as containing in it the common Rights and Privileges of Priesthood. For at other times, when he Wrote with cooler Thoughts about him, he does plainly and frequently enough assert the Authority of Bishops over Presbyters, and did himself constantly live in Communion with, and Subjection to Bishops. The other passage is that of *Aerius*, who held indeed that a Bishop and a Presbyter differed nothing in Order, Dignity, or Power. But he was led into this Error meerly through Envy and Emulation, being vext to see that his Companion *Eustathius* had gotten the Bishoprick of *Sebastia*, which himself had aimed at. This made him start aside, and talk extravagantly; but the Church immediately branded him for an *Heretick*, and drave him and his followers out of all Churches, and from all Cities and Villages. And *Epiphanius*, who was his Contemporary, represents him

Cont. Aer. heret. 75.

as very little better than a Madman ; and adds, that all Heresies that ever were from the beginning of the World, had been hatched either by Pride, or Vain Glory, or Covetousness, or Emulation, or some such Evil Inclination. But his Hereſie, it ſeems, was not long-liv'd, for we hear no more concerning this matter, till the Reformation at *Geneva*.

Secondly, We deſire them to ſhew any Chriſtian Church that did not conſtantly uſe *Liturgies*, and *Forms of Prayer*, in their Publick Offices and Adminiſtrations of Divine Worſhip : I take it for granted, that there were Forms of Publick Prayer in the *Jewiſh Church* ; and I make no doubt, but that the uſe of ſuch *Forms*, was, together with many other *Synagogue-rites* and *Uſages*, transferred into the Practice of the Chriſtian Church, and did actually obtain, in the moſt early Ages in all Churches, where there were not Miraculous Gifts, and every where as ſoon as thoſe Miraculous Gifts ceaſed, it being very fit and proper, and agreeable to Order and Decency, that the Peoples Devotions ſhould be thus Conducted and Governed in their Publick Miniſtrations. Not to inſiſt upon the *Carmen*, or *Hymn*, which even the *Proconſul Pliny*, ſays, the Chriſtians upon a ſet Day were wont, one among another, to ſay to Chriſt, as to their God ; Apparent footſteps of ſome Paſſages of their Ancient *Liturgies*, are yet extant in the Writings of *Origen* and *St. Cyprian* : And when *Eusebius* gives us an account, how Religiouſly *Constantine* De vit. Constant. lib. 4. c. 17. the Great ordered his Court, That he was wont to take the Holy Bible into his Hands, and carefully to Meditate upon it, and afterwards to offer up *Set* or *Compoſed* Prayers, together with his whole Royal Family ; he adds, *He did this after the manner*, or in imitation of the Church of God. *Nazianzen* tells us of

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St. Baſil.

In Sanctorum Basilii St. Basil, That he composed *Orders and Forms* of Prayer, and appointed decent *Ornaments* for the Altar. 20. And St. Basil himself reciting the manner of the Publick Service, that was used in the Monastical Oratories of his Institution; says, That nothing was done therein but what was Consonant and Agreeable to all the Churches of God. And the Council of *Laodicea*, holden much about the Year 365, expressly provides, that the same Liturgy, or Form of Prayers, should be always used both Morning and Evening: That so it might not be lawful for every one that would, to compose Prayers of his own Head, and to repeat them in the Publick Assemblies; as both *Zonaras* and *Balsamon* give the reason of that Canon. Further than this we need not go, the Case being henceforward evident beyond all Contradiction.

Can. 18.
conf. Conc.
Milev. can.
12. Conc.
Carth. 3.
c. 23.

Thirdly, Let them shew us any Church, that did not always set apart and observe *Festival* Commemorations of the Saints: besides the more solemn times for Celebrating the great Blessings of our Redeemer, his Birth-day and Epiphany, Easter in Memory of his Resurrection, Pentecost or Whitsuntide for the Mission of the Holy Ghost, they had Annual days for solemnizing the Memories of the Blessed Apostles; they had their *Memoriae* and *Natalitia Martyrum*, whereon they assembled every year, to offer up to God their Praises and Common Devotions, and by Publick Panegyricks to do honour to the memory of those Saints and Martyrs who had suffered for, or Sealed Religion with their Blood. Not to mention their Lent Fast and their Stationary Fasts on Wednesdays and Fridays, which *Epiphanius* more than once expressly says, were a Constitution of the Apostles. But the less need be said on this head, because few that have any Reverence for Antiquity, will have the hardiness to oppose it.

Serm. compend de Expos. fid. p. 466. adv. Aer. Hæres. 75.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, We desire them to produce any Church since the Apostles Times, that had not its Rites and Ceremonies, as many (if not more) in number, and as liable to exception, as those that are used in our Church at this Day; nay, there are few things, if any at all, required by our Constitution, which were not in use in the best Ages of Christianity. This, were it my design, I might demonstrate by an Induction of particulars, but it is fully done by other Hands. I shall therefore, only as a *Specimen*, instance in One, and the rather, because 'tis so much boggled at, (viz.) The *Sign of the Cross in Baptism*, which we are sure was a Common and Customary Rite in the time of *Tertullian* and *St. Cyprian*, the latter whereof says oft enough, that being Regene-
rated, that is, Baptized, they were Signed with the Sign of Christ; that they were Signed on their Fore-heads, who were thought worthy to be admitted into the fellowship of our Lord's Religion. And *St. Basil* plainly puts it amongst those Ancient Customs of the Church, which had been derived from the Apostles: Nay, *Tertullian* assures us, that they used it in the most common Actions of Life; that upon every motion, at their going out, and coming in, at their going to Bath, or to Bed, or to Meals, or whatever their Occasions called them to, they were wont to make the Sign of the Cross on their Fore-heads; and therefore 'tis no wonder, that they should never omit it in the most Solemn Act of their being initiated into the Christian Faith. And now let our *Dissenting-Brethren* seriously reflect, whether the Constant and Uniform Practice of the Church in all times, be not a mighty Testimony against their Separating from us, upon the account of those things, which were used in the wisest, best and happiest Ages of the Gospel; and
when

Cyp. adv. Demetr. p. 203. de Un. Eccl. p. 184. vid. de Laps. p. 169. Bas. de Spir. S. c. 27. Tert. de Coron. mil. c. 3.

See Durels
view of the
Government and
publick
worship of
God, 1662.
* p. 123,
124, &c.

when their Separation upon this account, can in point of Example, pretend not to much more than a Hundred Years Countenance and Authority to Support and Shelter it. And yet it has not that neither; for I could easily shew, that most, if not all, the Usages of our Church, are either practised in Foreign Churches, or at least, allowed of by the most Learned and Eminent Divines of the Reformation, whose Testimonies, to this purpose, are particularly enumerated, and ranked under their proper Heads, by Mr. *Sprint*, in his * *Cassander Anglicanus*, which they that are curious may Consult.

VI.

Sixthly, *We beg that those, who by their Conformity have declared, that they can close with our Communion, would still continue in the Communion of our Church.* This is a Request so reasonable, that I hope it cannot fairly be denied. Whatever Dissatisfactions others may alledge, to keep them at a distance from us, these Men can have nothing to pretend, having actually shewed that they can do it. For I am not willing to think, that herein such Men acted against their Consciences, or did it meerly to secure a gainful Office, or a place of Trust, or to escape the Lash and Penalty of the Law. These are Ends so very Vile and Sordid, so Horrible a prostitution of the Holy Sacrament, the most Venerable Mystery of our Religion, so deliberate a way of Sinning, even in the most Solemn Acts of Worship, that I can hardly suspect any should be guilty of it, but Men of Profligate and Atheistical Minds, who have put off all Sense of God, and Banished all Reverence of Religion. I would fain believe, that when any of our Brethren receive the Sacrament with us, they are fully persuaded

persuaded of the lawfulness of it, and that the Principle that brings them thither, is the Conscience of their Duty. But then I know not how to Answer it, why the same Principle that brings them thither at one time, should not bring them also at another, and that we should never have their company at that Solemn and Sacred Ordinance, but when the fear of some Temporal Punishment, or the prospect of some Secular Advantage prompts them to it. 'Tis commonly blamed in those of the *Romish* Church, that they can dispence with Oaths, and receive Sacraments to serve a turn, and to advance the Interest of their Cause: But God forbid, that so heavy a Charge should ever lie at the Doors of *Protestants*, and especially those, who would be thought most to abhor *Popish* Practices, and who would take it ill to be accounted not to make as much, if not more, Conscience of their ways than other Men. Now I beseech our *Dissenting*, or rather *Inconstant Brethren*, to reason a little; if our Communion be sinful, why did they enter into it? if it be lawful, why do they forsake it? is it not that, which the Commands of Authority have tied upon us, and whose Commands we are bound to submit to, *not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake*? Are not the Peace and Unity of the Church, things, that ought greatly to sway with all Sober, Humble, and Considering Christians? Does not the Apostle say, that *if it be possible, and as much as in us lies, we are to live Peaceably with all Men*? And shall Peace be broken only in the Church, where it ought to be kept most entire? And that by those, who acknowledge it to be *possible*, and within their power? Are they satisfied in their Consciences, to join in Communion with us, and will they not do it for the sake of the Church of God? Or will they refuse

refuse to do what is lawful, and as the Case stands necessary, in order to Peace, only because Authority Commands it, and has made it their Duty? Oh Sirs, I beseech you by all that's Dear and Sacred, to assist and help us, and not strengthen the Hands of those, who by a Causeless and Unjustifiable Separation, endeavour to rend and destroy the best Church in the whole Christian World.

VII.

Seventhly, *We beg of them that they would Consider, what Sad and Deplorable Mischiefs have ensued, upon bearing down the Constitution of the Church of England.* This is matter of Fact, and whereof many yet alive were made sensible by Woful Experience. Omitting what may seem of a little more remote Consideration, the Blood and Treasure, the Spoils and Ravages of the late War, the Enslaving and Oppressing all Ranks of Men, and what is above all, the Murder of an excellent and incomparable Prince; I shall instance in a few particulars, which were the more immediate Effects of it.

And *First*, No soeoner was the Church of *England* thrown down, but what Monstrous Swarms of Errors and Heresies broke in upon us, both for Number, and Impiety, beyond whatever had been heard of in the Church of God: And here I need go no further, than the sad account, which *Mr. Edwards* has given us in the several parts of his *Gangræna*. He was an eminent Minister of the *Presbyterian* Party, One, who as he tells the *Parliament*, had out of Choice and Judgment, from the very beginning, Embarked himself, with Wife, Children and Estate, and all that was dear to him in the same Ship with them, to sink

sink and perish, or to come safe to Land with them,
 and that in the most doubtful and difficult Times, not
 only in the beginning of the War and Troubles, in a
 Malignant place among Courtiers, where he had
 Pleaded their Cause, justified their Wars, and Satisfi-
 ed many that Scrupled, but when their Affairs were at
 lowest, had been most Zealous for them, Preaching,
 Praying, stirring up the People to stand for them,
 and had both gone out in Person, and lent Mony
 to them : He held Correspondence with considerable
 Persons in all parts of the Nation, and was careful
 to have the best Intelligence from all Quarters, and
 professes to lay down the Opinion and Errours
 which he mentions *in terminis*, and in their own
 Words and Phrases, Syllabically, and as near as might
 be. Now amongst infinite other things, he tells us
 'twas then commonly maintained, " That the
 " Scriptures cannot be said to be the Word of God,
 " and are no more to be Credited, than the Writings
 " of men, being not a divine, but Humane Tradi-
 " tion; that God has a Hand in, and is the Author
 " of the Sinfulness of his People, not of the Actions
 " alone, but of the very Pravity which is in them;
 " that all Lies come forth out of his Mouth, that the
 " Prince of the Air that Rules in the Children of
 " Disobdience is God; that in the Unity of the
 " God-head there is not a Trinity of Persons, but
 " that it is a Popish Tradition; that the Doctrine of
 " Repentance is a Soul-destroying Doctrine, and that
 " Children are not bound to Obey their Parents at all,
 " if they be Ungodly; that the Soul of Man is
 " Mortal, as the Soul of a Beast; that there is no
 " Resurrection at all of the Bodies of Men, nor Hea-
 " ven nor Hell after this Life. I instance only in
 " these as a Taft, not that they are all, or the Hundred

*Catal. and
discov. of
Errors.*

*P. 15, &c.
vid. 2d.*

Part. p. 5.

22. 24, 27.

105. 110.

fresh dis-

cov. p. 115.

162. & a-

libi [a] Jim.

part, no nor the worst, there being other Blasphemies and Impieties, which my Pen trembles to Relate.

Secondly, The Liturgy of our Church being discharged and thrown out, and every one left to his own liberty, 'tis scarce possible to believe, what wild and prodigious Extravagancies were upon all occasions used in holy things, not in Preaching only, but especially in Prayer, the most immediate Act of Worship and Address to God: It is an affront to the Majesty of Religious Worship, that there should be any thing in it Chulldish and Trivial, Absurd and Frivolous, that its Sacred Mysteries should be exposed to Contempt and Scandal by that Levity and distraction; that heat and Boldness, those weakneses and Indiscretions, those Loose, Raw, and Incongruous Effusions, which in most Congregations of those Times, did too commonly attend it: But the things I intend to Instance in, are of a far worse colour and complexion; for whose Ears would it not make to tingle, to hear men in the Pulpit telling God, That

View of the late troubles in Eng. cap. 43. p. 567, &c. See also Edwards Gang 3d. Part, a little before.

p. 17.

if he did not finish the good Work which he had begun in the Reformation of the Church, he would shew himself to be the God of Confusion, and such a One, as by cunning Stratagems had contrived the Destruction of his own Children; That God would bless the King, and Mollifie his hard Heart, that delights in Blood, for that he was fallen from Faith in God, and become an Enemy to his Church; let thine Hand, we pray thee, O Lord, our God, be upon him, and upon his Fathers House, but not upon thy people, that they should be Plagued: O God, O God, many are the Hands lift up against us, but there is one God; it is thou thy self, O Father, who dost us more Mischief, than they all: We know, O Lord, that Abraham made a Covenant, Moses and

and David made a Covenant, and our Saviour made a Covenant, but thy Parliaments Covenant is the greatest of all Covenants. I presume, the Devout and Serious Reader desires no more of such intolerable Profane and Lewd Stuff as this is; They that are curious of more, may find it, besides others, in *The short view of the late Troubles in England*, where Times, Places and Persons, are Particularly named.

Thirdly The Fences of Order and Discipline in the Church of *England* being broken down, what a horrid Inundation of all manner of Vice and Wickedness did immediatly over-flow the Land? The Assembly at Westminster Petitioned the Parliament, That some Severe Course might be taken against Fornication, Adultery and Incest, which, *say they*, do greatly abound, especially of late, by reason of Impunity. And Mr. Edwards speaking of the whole Tribe of Sectaries, tells us, "He was confident, that for this many Hundred Years, there had not been a Party that hath pretended to so much Holiness, Strictness, power of Godliness, tenderness of Conscience, above all other Men, as this Party hath done, that hath been guilty of so great Sins, horrible wickedness, provoking Abominations, as they are; with much more, both there and elsewhere, to the same purpose, and the Charge very often made good by particular Instances. So that indeed Hell seemed to have broke loose, and to have Invaded all Quarters, in despite of their Covenant, and all the little Schemes of their so much Magnified Reformation: The Covenant Cries (God grant not against you) for Reformation of the Kingdom, the Extirpation of Heresies, Schisms, Profaneness, &c. and these Impieties abound, as if we had taken a Covenant to maintain

July 19.
1644.

Further
discov. p.
187. 3d.
Part p.
185, &c.

*them ; and since it was taken these Sins which we have
 Covenanted against , have more abounded , than in the
 space of Ten Times so many Tears before , as Mr.
 Jenkin tells the Lords in Parliament. And that all
 that I have mentioned (which yet is infinitely short
 of what might be said) was the effect of the Ruin
 of the Church of England, and let in by the Method
 they took for Reformation, we have from their own
 confessions. " We, says Mr. Edwards, in these Four
 " last Years, have over-passed the Deeds of the Pre-
 " lates, and justified the Bishops, in whose time ne-
 " ver so many , nor so great Errours were heard of,
 " much less such Blasphemies or Confusions ; we
 " have worse things among us, than ever were in all
 " the Bishops Days ; more corrupt Doctrines and un-
 " heard of Practices, than in Eighty Years before.
 " ----- I am persuaded, if Seven Years ago, the Bi-
 " shops and their Chaplains had but Preached, Print-
 " ed, Licensed, dispersed up and down in City and
 " Country openly , a Quarter of these Errours, He-
 " resies, Blasphemies, which have been all these
 " ways vented by the Sectaries , the People would
 " have risen up, and stoned them , and pulled down
 " their Houses, and forced them to forbear such Do-
 " ctrines : O how is the Scene changed within these
 " few Years ! and not long after, he tells us, that
 " These are Risen, Increased, Reign and Prevail, so
 " far under a Parliament Sitting, not under the Bi-
 " shops, Corrupt-Clergy, Court-party, but under a
 " Parliament. And in his Epistle to the Lords and
 " Commons, before the first part of his *Gangræna*, he
 " tells them, " That the Errours, Heresies, Blasphe-
 " mies and Practices, of the Sectaries of this Time,
 " had been Broached and Acted within these Four last
 " Years in England, and that in *Four Quarters*, and in the
 the*

Fast Ser-
 mon, Jan.
 27. 1646.
 p. 29.

Cat. and
 discov. p
 73, 74, 76

“ the places under your Government and power, for
 “ which I tremble to think, least the whole Kingdom
 “ should be in Gods Black Bill ; that together with
 “ their Reformation, come in a Defomation, and
 “ worse things were come upon them, than ever they
 “ had before : they had put down the Book of *Common-*
 “ *Prayer*, but there were many amongst them, that
 “ had put down the Scriptures, slighting, yea,
 “ Blaspheming them : he tells them, they had cast
 “ out the Bishops, and their Officers, and they had
 “ many that had cast down to the ground all Mini-
 “ sters in all the Reformed Churches ; they had cast
 “ out Ceremonies in the Sacraments, and they had
 “ many that had cast out the Sacraments themselves ;
 with many more sad complaints which he there
 makes. To sum up all in the words of my Author ; *Ubi supra,*
 “ In this Catalogue the Reader may see great Errors, *p. 73.*
 “ and yet may turn himself again and behold greater,
 “ namely damnable *Heresies*, and yet turn himself a-
 “ gain and read Horrid Blasphemies ; and a third time,
 “ and read Horrible Disorders, Confusions, strange
 “ and unheard of Practices, not only against the Light
 “ of Scripture, but Nature, as in Women’s Preaching,
 “ in Stealing away Men’s Wives and Children from
 “ Husbands and Parents, in Baptizing Women Na-
 “ ked, in the Presence and Sight of Men, &c. And
 thus we see by what means it was, that the Nation
 came to be Pestred with Opinions and Practices,
 Impious beyond the Example of former Ages, and
 such as were not once named among the Gentiles, to the
 Infinite Prejudice and dishonour both of our Religion
 and our Nation. It being the Observation which an
 Ingenious Foreigner, who resided at London in those
 times, made upon this occasion ; one of the Fruits, *A Letter from a Noble Venetian to Card Bar-
 barino. translated and Printed 1648.*
 says He, of this Blessed Parliament, and of these two
 Sectaries *p. 49.*

Sectaries (Presbyterians and Independents) is, that they have made more Jews and Atheists, than I think there is in all Europe besides.

I doubt not but that the greatest part of our Dissenters do from their Souls detest the Heresies, Blasphemies, and Wickednesses that have been mentioned; but then the Consideration ought to oblige them to double their diligence to prevent the like dismal Effects for the time to come, and not to open the Gap again, at which they must necessarily flow in upon us. By what has been done they may see, what a Blessed Reformation they may expect by the Ruin of this Church; *for the thing that hath been, is that which shall be*; the same causes set on foot by the same Principles will Eternally produce the same Effects; and though Men at first may mean never so well, yet Temptations will insensibly grow upon them, and Accidents happen, which in the Progress will carry them infinitely beyond the Line of their first Intentions, and engage them in Courses, out of which, when they come to discern their Error, it may be too late for them to Retire. In the beginning of the long Parliament, I make no question, but the far greatest part of them met together with very honest and good Intentions, and designed no more than to Correct some little Irregularities, which they apprehended to be in Church or State: But wee see how these very Persons were carried from one passage to another; and in time transported to those very things which at first they had so vehemently protested and declared against, till at length Horrid Enormities came to be acted by and under them, which no age can Paralel: which ought to be a Sufficient Caution to all, how they shake the least Stone, that belongs to the Foundation, lest by picking out one after

ter another, the whole House tumble about their Ears, when it is beyond their own Power to support it. I shall shut up this Head with a brief Recapitulation of some of those Inferences, which Mr. *Edwards* makes from the State of those Loose and Licentious times, we have been speaking of, and then leave the Reader to judge, whether they be not as Applicable to present Circumstances, under which we are: He infers thus, First, we may hence see how dangerous it is to despise and let alone a small Parry. Secondly, That it is more than time fully and Effectually to settle the Government and Discipline of the Church; Thirdly, What the Mischief, Evil, and Danger of a Toleration, and pretended Liberty of Conscience would be to this Kingdom, and what it would Prove and Produce. Fourthly, That it sufficiently Justifies in the Sight of the World, those Ministers and People who are Zealous for setting Religion, and cry out for Government, who Preach, Petition, speak often one to another of these things. Fifthly, what a great Evil and Sin Separation is from the Communion of the Reformed Churches, and how highly displeasing to God for Men to make a Rent and Schism in the Church of God. Sixthly, That all such who have been deceived and drawn away, under pretence of greater Purity, Holiness, &c. and have any Fear and Awe of God and his Word, be Exhorted to leave and forsake them, and return to the Publick Assemblies and Communion of this and other Reformed Churches. And God grant we may hearken to this Counsel, and may seriously lay these things to heart.

*Cat. and
Discov.
Part 3d.
p. 52, 53,
57, 70.
Further
Discov. p.
195, 203.*

VIII. Eighthly,

VIII.

Eighthly, *We desire it may be considered, what plain and apparent Advantages Separation gives to the Common Enemy of the Protestant Religion in these Nations :* The Church of *England* is notoriously known to have been the most strong and standing Bulwark of *Protestancy*, ever since the Reformation ; for being Founded on Scripture-grounds, and the Practice of True, Genuine, Primitive Antiquity, and having been reformed, by the most wise, regular, and justifiable Methods ; it stands like a Rock impregnable against all the Assaults, which the Church of *Rome* makes upon it. This has engag'd them to Plant all their Batteries to beat it down, as being the only Church considerable enough to stand in their way : and when not able to effect it by any other Arts, they have betaken themselves to the old Artifice of Ruining us, by dividing us. In Order hereunto they have upon all occasions strenuously promoted the Separation, mixed themselves with our Dissenters, put on every shape, that they might the better follow the Common outcry against our Church, as *Popish* and *Anticristian*, spurring on the people to call for a more pure and spiritual way of worship, and to Clamour for liberty and Toleration, as wherein they well knew they themselves were like to have the greatest share ; and that having subverted all Order, and beaten people out of all sober Principles, they foresaw they must be necessitated at last to center in the Communion of the *Romish* Church. This was a Trade they began betimes, almost in the very Infancy of the Reformation. Witness the Story of *Faithful Commin*, a *Dominican* Fryer, who passed under the notion of a Zealous Puritan, and was much admired

admired and followed by the People for his seeming Piety, spiritual Gifts, and Zeal against Popery. But being apprehended, *Anno* 1567. and accused for an Impostor, was examined at large before the Queen and her Council, and put under Bail : when finding the Climat was like to be too hot for him, and having by a cheat brought off his Bail, and told his deluded followers, that he was acquitted by her Majesty and the Council, and warned of God to go beyond the Seas, to instruct the *Protestants* there, and that he would come again ; and having assured them that Spiritual Prayer was the chief Testimony of a true Protestant, and that the set Form of Prayer in *England* was but the *Mass* Translated, and having, with abundance of *extempore*-Prayers and Tears squeezed out of them a Collection of a Hundred and Thirty Pounds for his Journey, besides private Gifts ; away he goes for *Rome*, and acquaints Pope *Pius Quintus* with what he had done, and by what Methods, and how odious he had made the Church of *England* to the *Puritans*, and that it would be a stumbling-block to that Church while it was a Church. Upon which the *Pope* commended and rewarded him with Two Thousand Ducates for his good Service. All which particulars are more fully made out from Secretary *Cecil's* Papers, whose Memorials were lately brought to light. Witness also that other passage concerning *Thomas Heath* a *Jesuite*, who much about the same time was sent over into *England* to Act the same Part, which he did, not only by Preaching, but by crying up Spiritual Prayers, and running down all set Forms, as being without any warrant from Scripture, by Labouring to refine the *Protestants*, as he called it, and to take off all smacks of Ceremonies, that in the least tended to the *Romish* Faith. For all which he

*Foxes and
Fire-
brands,
Print.
1680. p. 7.
&c.*

was mightily flocked after, and admired every day more and more. But *Anno*. 1568. he was discovered by a Letter, that casually dropt out of his Pocket as he was Preaching in the Pulpit at *Rochester*, importing, that the Council of their Fraternity had sent him Collections, and Instructions for carrying on the Work, and that this way of dividing *Protestants* was the only way for the recalling Men back again to the Mother Church. Hereupon he was examined by the Bishop of *Rochester*, and did not much deny the main of the charge, and upon the searching of his Lodgings, there were found several Books fitted for his purpose, as-against Infant Baptism, &c. and in one of his Boots, a Licence from the Fraternity of the *Jesuites*, and a *Bull* of *Pius Quintus*, giving him leave to preach what Doctrine that Society pleased, for the dividing of the *English Protestants*, or as he called them, *Hereticks*; The issue was, that *Heath* was close Imprisoned, set in the Pillory at the High Cross; his Ears cut off, his Nose slit, his Fore-head branded, and he condemned to perpetual Imprisonment, but soon after he dyed suddenly, being suspected to have poysoned himself: The whole account hereof being published from the Authentick Register of the Church of *Rochester*.

The same Course we need not doubt, the *Papists* held on in the succeeding times, these being some of the main Directions, which *Contzen* the *Jesuit* gives for the reducing *Popery* into a Country, that it be done under pretence of ease to tender Consciences, and that Liberty be granted to that end, and that as much use be made of the division of Enemies, as of the agreement of Friends. What a stroak they had in fomenting the differences and distractions, that brought on the late Civil Wars, and how active they were both in the Counsels and Proceedings of the

Parlia-

Polit. l. 2.
c. 18.
Sect. 6.

Parliament Party, the World needs not to be told at this time of day; " great numbers of them, both Commanders and others, serving in their Armies, great industry was used to corrupt the Loyalty and Affection of those of that Religion, and private promises and undertakings were made to them, that if they would assist them against the King, all the Laws made in their prejudice should be Repealed; as the late King of blessed Memory tells the World in one of his publick Declarations, after the Victory at *Edgehil*; Adding, that tho some few of Eminent Abilities for Command and Conduct, and of moderate and unfactious dispositions were employed in his Service; yet, *we are confident, that a far greater number of that Religion, is in the Army of the Rebels, than in our own.* And the King it seems had good reason to say so. For as *de Salmonet*, a Secular Priest, who wrote in *French* a History of our late Civil Wars, informs us, in that very Fight at *Edge-hill*, besides two Companies of *Walloons*, and other *Roman-Catholicks* that served there, that (says he) which did most surprize every Body was, that several *Popish* Priests were found amongst the Dead that were slain on the *Parliament* side. So plain is it, that they served in their Armies, were present at their Councils, and upon all occasions mix'd with their Parties, that they might widen the Breach beyond all recovery. Thus was it then. And about the time of the King's coming in, a Letter of Advice was written by *Seignior Ballarini* concerning the best way of Managing the *Popish* Interest in *England*, upon his Majestie's Restauration; wherein it was advised, especially to obstruct the Settlement of the Fundamental Constitutions of the Kingdom, to set up the prosperous way of Fears and Jealousies of the King and Bishops, to asperse the Bishops and Ministers of the

Octob. 23.
1642. vid.
Collect. of
the Kings
Works.
Part. 2.
fol. 213.
*L' Historie
des troubles,
&c.*
p. 165. see
the short
view of the
late troubles
in
England,
c. 43. p.
554.

See Dr.
Stilling-
fleet's Pre-
face to the
unreasona-
bleness of
Separation.
p. 20. &c.

Colemans
Tryal, p.
101.

Def. of his
Answ. to
the Admo-
nit. P. 349.

Church of *England*, and to represent its Doctrine and Worship as coming too near to the Church of *Rome*, to second the Factious in promoting an Indulgence, and to endeavour, that the Trade and Treasure of the Nation might be engrossed between themselves, and other discontented Parties. And Mr. Coleman himself owned it at his Condemnation, that perhaps he thought, that *Popery* might come in, if Liberty of Conscience had been granted. And this is that, which wise Archbishop *Whitgift* long ago foresaw would come to pass, when he told the *Dissenters* of those Days, *I am persuaded that Anti-Christ worketh effectually at this Day, by our Stirs and Contentions, whereby he hath, and will more prevail against this Church of England, then by any other means whatsoever.* And now upon the whole matter, I desire our *Dissenting Brethren* to consider, whether the orderly and truly Primitive Constitution of the Church of *England*, or Innovation, Schism and Separation, be the likelier way to keep out *Popery*; and do therefore Conjure them, by all the Kindness which they pretend for the *Protestant* Religion, heartily to join in Communion with us, as which I believe, humanely speaking, to be, if not the only, at least the only safe and durable means of shutting *Popery* for ever out of Doors.

IX.

Ninthly, *We desire of them, that if neither these nor any other Advices and Considerations can prevail with them, they would at least cease to Reproach the Government, for Reviving the Execution of the Laws, about these matters?* I know it is very natural to Men to complain, when any thing pinches them, but then they ought to be so just, as to consider, whose fault
it

it is that has brought it upon them. The Laws in this case were framed with great Advice, and upon dear bought Experience, and every Nation in the World thinks it self obliged, when no other ways will do it, by Penalties to secure the Publick Peace, Safety, and Tranquility of the State, though it may sometimes press hard in some particular Cases, when Men through Fancy, Humour, Mistake or Design, (especially about little, and as themselves confess, indifferent matters,) shall endanger the Publick Welfare, and by an ill Example expose the Reverence and Majesty of the Laws. And yet notwithstanding all this, and a great deal more that might be said, we find them at every turn charging the Government, for using them Cruelly, and with the hardest Measure, censuring their Superiours, and *speaking Evil of Dignities*; and this not only the Cry of the mean and common Sort, but of their chiefest Leaders, even to this Hour: It being no hard matter (but that I love not to exasperate) to instance in several things, that are no very good Arguments of that *Obedient Patience*, which some of them so much pretend to. It is far from my Temper to delight in Cruelty, much more to plead for Severity to be used towards *Dis-senting Brethren*, and therefore should have said nothing in this Argument, were it not necessary to Vindicate the Government, which upon these occasions, I have so often heard Blamed and Censured. I would these Persons who complain so much, would consider a while, how their Predecessors were dealt with in the times of the good *Queen Elizabeth*; which will appear, either from the Laws then made, or from the Proceedings then had against them. The Laws then made against them, were chiefly these; In the First of the Queen, *An Act for the Uniformity of*
Common-

Common-Prayer, &c. wherein, among other Clauses and Penalties, it is provided, " That if any Person, " shall in any Playes, Songs, Rhimes, or by other " open Words, declare or speak any thing in the " derogation, depraving, or despising the Book of " *Common-Prayer*, or any thing therein contained, " being thereof lawfully convicted, he shall forfeit for " the first Offence an hundred, for the second four " hundred Marks, for the Third, all his Goods and " Chattels, and shall suffer Imprisonment during Life. A Clause, which had it been kept up in its due Life and Power, our *Liturgy* and *Divine Offices*, had been Treated with much more Respect and Reverence, then I am sure they have met with, especially of late. In Her Fifth Year, an Act was passed for the due Execution of the Writ *de Excommunicato capi-endo*; amongst others, particularly levelled against such as refuse to receive the *Holy Communion*, or to come to *Divine Service*, as now commonly used in the Church of *England*, with severe Penalties upon those, that shall not yield up themselves to the same Writ. *Anno. 13.* passed an Act of general Pardon, but it was with an Exception of all those, that had committed any Offence against the Act for the *Uniformity of Common-Prayer*, or were Publishers of Seditious Books, or Disturbers of *Divine Service*. *Anno 23.* By an Act to retain the *Queen's Majesty's Subjects in their due Obedience* it is provided, " That " every Person above the Age of Sixteen Years, " which shall not repair to some Church or usual " place of *Common-Prayer*, but forbear the same " by the space of a Month; shall for every such " Moth forfeit Twenty Pounds : Which Act was again Confirmed and Ratified by another in the 29th. Year of Her Reign, with many Clauses and Provisions

ons for the better Execution of it. And by the Act of the 35th of Her Reign, " If any Person so forbearing, shall willingly joyn in, or be present at any " Assemblies, Conventicles and Meetings, under colour or pretence of any Exercise of Religion, contrary to the Laws of the Realm, such Person being " lawfully Convicted, shall be Imprisoned without " Bail or Mainprize, untill he Conform, and if he do " not that within Three Months, he shall be obliged " to Abjure the Realm, and if refusing to Abjure, or " returning without Licence, he shall be Adjudged a " Felon, and suffer as in case of Felony, without " benefit of Clergy.

Such were Her Laws, and such also were Her Proceedings, against those who faulted in their Conformity, or began to Innovate in the Discipline of the Church; and these Proceedings as quick and smart, as any can be said to be against the *Dissenters* of this time. Do they complain of their Ministers being Silenced now? so they were then, being deprived of their Benefices and Church-Preferments, for their Inconformity. Thus *Sampson* was turned out of his *Deanry* of *Christ-Church*, for refusing to Conform to the Orders and Ceremonies of the Church. *Cartwright*, the very Head of them, Expelled the College, and deprived of the *Lady Margarets* Lecture. *Travers*, turned out from Preaching at the *Temple*; with many more, Suspended from the Ministry by the *Queens* Authority, and the Approbation of the *Bishops*; for not Subscribing to some new Rites and Ceremonies imposed upon them, as appears from *Beza's* Letter to *Bishop Grindal*, Anno 1566. Are any in Prison? so they were then, *Benson*, *Button*, *Hallingham*, *Cartwright*, *Knewstubs*, and many others; some in the *Marshalsey*, others in the *White-Lion*; some in the Gate-

Bez. Epist.
8.

Gatehouse, *others in the Counter, or in the Clink, or in Bridewel, or in Newgate : Poor Men miserably handled with Revilings, Deprivations, Imprisonments, Banishments ;* if we may believe what themselves tell us, both in the *First* and *Second Admonition*. And what is yet far beyond any thing, which God be thanked, our *Dissenters* can pretend to complain of, several of them lost their Lives ; *Barrow* and *Greenwood* were Executed for their Scandalous and Seditious Writings ; *Penry* and *Udal* Indicted and Arraigned, for Defaming the Queens Government in a Scandalous Book, Written against *the supposed Governours*, as they called them, *of the Church of England* ; for which they were both Cast and Condemned, to be Executed as Felons, but Arch-Bishop *Whitgift* interposing, they were Reprieved, and *Udal* suffered to Die, as he did soon after, in his Bed. The truth is, the wise and wary Queen beheld Schism growing on apace, and needed not to be told what ill Influence it was like to have, both upon Church, and State, and therefore Resolved to carry a Streight Hand, as well over *Puritanism* on the one side, as *Popery* on the other ; and in order hereunto, She charged Arch-Bishop *Whitgift* to be Vigilant and Careful, to Reduce Ministers by their Subscription and Conformity to the settled Orders and Government, Adding, *That She would have the Discipline of the Church of England formerly Established, of all Men duly to be Observed, without alteration of the least Ceremony.* But nothing more fully discovers her Judgment and Resolution in this matter, then what She gave in Command to the *Lord-Keeper-Puckering*, to tell the *Parliament* : part of his Speech (Transcribed and Published some Years since, from the Original Copy, under his own Hand Writing, by an Eminent Divine of this Church,) was as followeth,

Sir G.
Paul, *Life*
of A. B.
Whitgift,
Numb. 53.
p. 29.

Dr. Peirce
New Dis-
cov. against
Mr. Baxter.
1659. Ch.
5. Sect 12.
p. 109.

followeth, ----- " And especially, you are Com-
 " manded by Her Majesty to take heed, that no Ear
 " be given, or Time afforded, to the wearisome Solli-
 " citations of those that commonly be called *Puri-*
 " *taners*, wherewithall the late Parliaments have been
 " exceedingly Importuned. Which sort of Men,
 " whilst in the Giddiness of their Spirits, they labour
 " and strive to advance a new Eldership, they do no-
 " thing else but disturb the good Repose of the Church
 " and Common-wealth : which is as well grounded
 " for the Body of Religion it self, and as well guided
 " for the Discipline, as any Realm that professeth the
 " Truth. And the same thing is already made good
 " to the World, by many of the Writings of Learned
 " and Godly Men, neither Answered, nor Answera-
 " ble, by any of these new fangled Refiners. And as
 " the present Case standeth, it may be doubted, Whe-
 " they they, or the *Jesuits*, do offer more Danger, or
 " be more speedily to be repressed. For albeit the *Je-*
 " *suits* do impositon the Hearts of Her Majesties Sub-
 " jects, under a Pretext of Conscience, to withdraw
 " them from their Obedience due to her Majesty, yet
 " do the same but closely, and only in privy Cor-
 " ners, but these Men do both Publish in their
 " Printed Books, and Teach in all their Conventicles
 " sundry Opinions, not only dangerous to the well-
 " settled Estate and Policy of the Realm, but also much
 " derogatory to Her Sacred Majesty, and Her Crown,
 " as well by, &c. In all which Things (however in
 " many other Points, they pretend to be at War with
 " the Popish *Jesuits*, yet by the Separation of them-
 " selves from the Unity of their Fellow-Subjects, and
 " by abusing the Sacred Authority and Majesty of
 " their Prince, they do both joyn and concur with the
 " *Jesuits* in opening the Door, and preparing the way

“to the *Spanish* Invasion, that is Threatned against the Realm. Thus far he, by her Majesties most Royal Pleasure, and Wise Direction, as he there speaks. To which let me add, That the Speech took such effect, that the Parliament passed the *Act* of 35th of *Eliz.* the Severest *Act* against *Dissenters* in the whole Body of our Laws. And indeed, so Jealous was the Queen of the least appearances of Innovation, that Arch-Bishop *Grindall*, only for giving too much encouragement to *Prophefings* (which were beheld as likely to prove Nurseries of Schism and Faction, as indeed they did) fell under Her Displeasure, and was Sequestred from his Archiepiscopal Jurisdiction, and though great intercession was made in his behalf, yet could he never be restored to his Dying Day.

This was the State of things then, and yet these were the Proceedings of those Days, which our *Dissenters* at another time, are wont so much to Magnifie and Extol ; nothing of late having been so much in their Mouth, as the Wisdom and Prudence, the Care and Diligence, the Zeal and Piety of Good *Queen Elizabeth*. I speak not this to cast any reflexion upon the Memory of that incomparable Princess, whom we have all the reason in the World to own to have been the Glorious Instrument of Perfecting and Setling the Reformation in this Kingdom; and whose Memory will be dear and pretious, as long as the *Protestant* Name has a Being in *England*. But I only take notice, how extreamly partial People are, and how apt to be prejudiced against the present Government under which they live, and to be always Crying out, That the former Days were better then these ? whereas, supposing their Circumstances were really harder than they are, and harder then those of the *Puritans* in former times, yet they have no reason
to

to accuse the Government of Rigor and Severity towards them, if three Things be farther taken into Consideration.

First, That the *Dissenters* of old, especially the first Race of them, were generally much more Modest and Peaceable then those of latter times, more Conformable to the Laws, less Turbulent and Offensive to the Government: when they could not Conform as Ministers, they yet did as private Christians, and quietly acquiesced in their Suspension, or Deprivation, and as one truly says of them, *When they could not be Active without Sinning, [as they judged] they could be passive without Murmuring.* They meddled not with things without their Line, nor mixt themselves with matters of State; Declared, that Kings have power by the Law of God, to make such Ecclesiastical Laws as tend to the good Ordering of the Churches in their Dominions, that the Churches ought not to be Disobedient to any of their Laws, that if any thing were Commanded contrary to the Word, they ought not to resist the King therein, but peaceably to forbear Disobedience, and sue to him for Grace and Mercy, and where that cannot be obtained, meekly to submit themselves to the punishment. They generally came to Church, and did not run into Separate Congregations, nay, writ stoutly and smartly against those who began then to attempt a Separation. But whether our Modern *Dissenters* have observed the same Course, and be of this Spirit and Temper, let the World judge, yea, let themselves be Judges in the Case.

Secondly, Sad Experience of the Evil Consequences of Schism and Separation, have made it necessary for the Government to take all just and lawful ways for preventing the like for the time to come. Men first

See a Book called, The Protestation of the Kings Supremacy. 1605. Numb. 8. 9. 11.

began to be dissatisfied with the Rites and Orders of the Church, then discontented that they were not presently gratified with an Alteration, Discontent brought on Sedition, Sedition Rebellion, and Rebellion the Ruine of Church and State. And what wonder, if the Laws bear a little hard there, where there are the same Appearances, and where there seem to be the same Tendencies and Inclinations to the same Dismal State of Things? Whoever considers by what Ways the most flourishing Kingdom in the World, and the best Church that ever was since the Primitive Times, were miserably Harassed and Destroyed, cannot think, that those who sit at the Helm should be content to have them Ruined again by the same means; especially, after the King, for several Years together, has in vain tryed, by all the Methods of Favour and Indulgence, to win upon them.

Thirdly, Let those who now complain so much, consider, How little Favour themselves shewed to others when they were in Power; How the Loyal and Episcopal Party were Plundered, Sequestred, Decimated, Dungeoned, Starved, and often stunk to Death: What Oaths and Covenants were Rigorously Imposed upon them; what Restraints laid upon their Liberties, both Civil and Ecclesiastical; though all this while they had Law and Right standing for them. In the Year 1645, an *Ordinance* of Parliament was published, 'That if any *Person* hereafter 'shall at any Time use, or cause to be used, the Book 'of Common-prayer in any Church or publick place 'of Worship, or in any private Place or Family within the Kingdom; every *Person* so offending, should 'for the first Offence pay the Sum of Five, for the second ten Pounds, and for the third, should suffer one 'whole Years Imprisonment, without Bail or Main-prize.

An Ordinance for putting in Execution the Directory, August 11. 1645.

prize. This one would think was very hard, but there is something harder yet behind; For *Cromwel* being got into the Throne, Published a *Delaration*, ^{24 November, 1655.} at that time Equivalent to a Law, ' That no Person ' who had been sequestred for delinquency, or had ' been in Arms against the Parliament, or adhered ' unto, or had abetted or assisted the Forces raised ' against them, should keep in their Houses or Families, as Chaplains or Schoolmasters for the Education of their Children, any sequestred or ejected Minister, Fellow of a Colledge or Schoolmaster, nor permit any of their Children to be taught by such, upon pain of being proceeded against as was directed, and that no Person who had been sequestred or ejected for delinquency or scandal, shall hereafter keep any School, either publick or private, nor preach in any publick place, or at any private Meeting of any other Persons then those of his own Family, nor Administer Baptism, or the Lords Supper, or marry any Persons, or use the Book of Common-Prayer, or the Forms of Prayer therein contained, upon Pain that every Person so Offending in any of the Premisses, shall be proceeded against as by the said Order is provided and directed. There needs no Comment upon these Proceedings, they do not only Whisper, but speak aloud to the present Generation of *Dissenters*, to tell them how little reason they have to complain.

X.

Lastly, We beg of them, that before they pull down any further Trouble or Suffering upon themselves, they would Consider, Whether the Cause they engage in, be such, as will bear them out with Comfort before God another

ther Day. 'Tis not Suffering or refusing to comply with the External Circumstances of our Religion, that can be said to be a *Persecution for Righteousness sake*, it not being the Suffering, but the Cause that makes the Martyr. Then I *suffer as a Christian*, when the Honour of Christ, or something that offers Violence to my Religion, and Christianity is concerned in it, when I suffer for that which I cannot avoid, without disowning my self to be a Christian, and *making Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience.* But where the Case is not evidently this, a Man may draw Miseries upon himself, and yet not *suffer as a Christian*, because it may proceed from Humour, or Interest, or the Conduct of a misinformed Judgment, mistaking things for what they are not: Men very often place Religion in doing, or not doing, what is no part of it, and then think they may safely Suffer upon that account, when there is more, it may be, of Passion or Prejudice, of Fancy or Opinion, of Humour or Mistake, then of the real Concerns of Piety or Religion. I am very sure, neither the Ancient Christians, would have passed through the *Fiery-Tryal* every Day, nor the Holy Martyrs in *Queen Mary's Days*, have thought themselves obliged to Forfeit their Estates, much less their Lives, had no more been required of them then there is of us, to come to Church, or to Kneel at the Sacrament; but would rather have Blessed God, and thankfully owned the Favour of the Governours, under which they lived, might they have enjoyed both upon the same Terms as we do. In Cases that only concern indifferent things, and meer Circumstances of Worship, stiffly and obstinately to stand out, is, rather for a Man to be a Martyr to his own Humour and Opinion, then to the Cause of Christ. Whether this be not the Case of our *Dissent-*
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ing-Brethren, they themselves might quickly see, would they but lay aside the unreasonableness of their Prejudices, and lay no more stress upon things than they ought to bear. Let us hear what Mr. Baxter, in a late Book, says to this matter, *I am One that have been first in all the Storms that have befallen the Ministry, these Twenty Years past, (to look no farther back,) and yet my Conscience commandeth me to say, as I have oft done, that many through mistake, I am persuaded, now Suffer as Evil-doers for a Cause that is not Good and Justifiable.* I shall leave with them the Wise and Excellent Counsel which was given by one in the time of the Elder Puritans, *Follow true Antiquity, and the general Practice of the Church of God in all Ages, where they have not Erred from the evident Truth of God. If thou Sufferest, let it be for known Truth, and against known Wickedness; for which thou hast Example in Gods Word, or of the Holy Martyrs in Church-Story. But beware of far-fetched Consequences, or for Suffering for new Devices, and for things, formerly, unto all Ages unknown, seem they never so Holy and Just unto Man.*

Obed.
Patience
P. 79.

R. Ber-
nard's Chri-
stian Ad-
vert. by
Counsels of
Peace.
1608.

All that now remains, is, to call upon our *Dissenting-Brethren*, by all the Considerations of Love and Kindness to themselves, of Tenderness for the Honour of Religion, the Edification of their *Brethren*, and the Peace, Security, and Welfare of the Church and State wherein they live, that they would duely and impartially Weigh and Consider things, put a stop to the Separation wherein they are engaged, return to, and hold Communion with us, and keep the *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

Let them bethink themselves what a mighty Evil Schism is, and will be so found before God at the last Day, and whether any thing can be meet to be put in the Ballance with the Peace and Unity of the Church,

Ap. Euseb.
lib. 6. c. 45.
Epist. 52.
(ad Antio-
chian.) de
Unit. Eccles.
fol. 181,
184. &c.

Church, and those vastly-important Consequences, that depend upon it. Let us consider a little, what a deep Sense the best and most pious Christians that ever were, had of it: *It's better to Suffer any thing, than that the Church of God should be Rent asunder; it is every whit as Glorious, and, in my Opinion, a far greater Martyrdom, to dye for not Dividing the Church, than for refusing to Sacrifice to Idols, says Dionysius, the good Bishop of Alexandria, in his Letter to Novatian.* And St. Cyprian speaks very severe things to this purpose, "That a Person going from the Church to Schismatics, tho' in that Capacity he should dye for Christ, yet can he not receive the Crown of Martyrdom. And how oft elsewhere doth he tell us, "That such a one has no part in the Law of God, or the Faith of Christ, or in Life and Salvation; that without this Unity and Charity, a Man cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and that although he should deliver up himself to the Flames, or cast his Body to wild Beasts, yet this would not be the Crown of his Faith, but the Punishment of his Falshood, not the Glorious Exit of a Religious Courage, but the Issue of Despair; such a One may be Kill'd, but he cannot be Crown'd. He rents the Unity of the Church, destroys the Faith, disturbs the Peace, dissolves Charity, and Profanes the Holy Sacrament. And were it necessary, I could shew, that the Ancient Fathers generally say the same thing. And can we now be such degenerate Christians, (if we can be said to be Christians at all) as to make nothing at all of Schism and Separation? Are not the Glory of God, the Peace of the Church, and the Good of Souls, things as considerable, as necessary, and indispensable now, as they were of old? I beseech you, Brethren, return from whence you are fallen, and let us all with one Shoulder set our selves to Support that Church, with whose Ruine we are all likely to sink and fall. Let us lay aside Envy and Strife, Confusion and every Evil Work, and let us follow after the things which make for Peace, and things wherewith one may Edify another.

F I N I S.

